



United States Mission to the OSCE

Session 3: Role of the OSCE in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation I

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
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Matters of early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation are some of the most important challenges currently facing the OSCE, since they affect every other aspect of security and stability throughout our region. It is therefore in our common interest to strengthen the OSCE's capacity and effectiveness in this regard.

Indeed, much of the work of this organization can be understood in terms of conflict prevention or crisis management, either in the form of long-term structural activities such as sustainable democratic institution-building, or short-term direct measures, such as the Chairmanship's mediation efforts in crises.

We believe that the OSCE is the best possible regional framework for conflict prevention and crisis management, and for working toward sustainable peace. As we have said before, we do not believe new treaties or institutions are required, but real steps can and should be taken to enhance our common, comprehensive security.

The OSCE should continue its assistance to participating States in building the democratic institutions and domestic capacities that are the foundation for long-term stability and security. Such capacity building is what former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to as the creation of a "culture of prevention." Simultaneously, the OSCE should undertake measures to strengthen its "early action" capability in order to enhance its response to tensions arising within or among the participating States. As we look back at events over the past eleven years, it is clear that we need to establish new capacities and to examine practical, concrete steps the OSCE can take to deal with the problems we face.

The cross-dimensional nature of conflict necessitates a cross-dimensional response. We need to ensure that we have the appropriate problem-solving tools at hand, in all three dimensions, and that we are committed to using them whenever and wherever necessary. The best capabilities and procedures are ineffective without the political will – or willingness – to use them.

Although we must make better use of the existing tools for conflict prevention and crisis management, we will also need to develop new tools to improve our response capabilities. As part of the Corfu Process, the U.S. put forward initiatives in all three dimensions that would

considerably strengthen the OSCE's ability to prevent and resolve conflict, respond to and manage crises, and conduct sustainable post-conflict rehabilitation.

For example, we have proposed the creation of an OSCE crisis prevention capability that would enable the OSCE to respond more swiftly and effectively to emerging crisis situations. It could empower the OSCE to offer rapid humanitarian relief, provide impartial monitoring, and facilitate negotiations.

We all recognize that there are circumstances and situations in which quick action, with host nation consent (similar to current military transparency measures), is not only warranted, but essential to fulfill the OSCE's core mandate. Looking back at the OSCE's role in recent conflicts such as those in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, we believe that providing the Chairmanship with an enhanced toolset and greater flexibility to act quickly and decisively is an important and appropriate step for us to take in 2010.

We also believe that more attention must be devoted to resolving the protracted conflicts, as these are serious, ongoing threats to security and stability. We believe that restoring a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia would be an important step forward to reducing tensions and facilitate resolution of the conflict.

Thank you, Madam Chair.